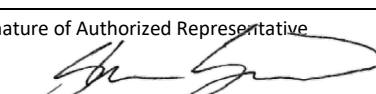


BROADBAND EXPANSION GRANT APPLICATION

For Fiscal Year 2022

<p>Primary Applicant (Name and Address):</p> <p>COCHRANE COOPERATIVE TELEPHONE COMPANY 103 WEST 5TH STREET COCHRANE, WI 54622</p>	<p>Applications MUST be UPLOADED to ERF via the Commission's website, http://psc.wi.gov/apps35/ERF_upload/content/mymenu.aspx. Refer to section 2.3 for detailed instructions.</p> <p>Applications are due and MUST be uploaded to ERF no later than: March 17, 2022 at 4:00pm (16:00) Central Time. Late applications will not be accepted.</p>
	<p>Contact for further information: PSCStatebroadbandoffice@wisconsin.gov</p>
	<p>Date: December 1, 2021</p>
<p>The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin is seeking applications for Broadband Expansion Grants. The Commission may award one or more grants during Fiscal Year 2022 to public and private entities that meet the eligibility requirements set forth in Wis. Stat. § 196.504. This grant round will be funded with bond proceeds authorized by the Wisconsin Building Commission pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 13.48(30). As such, successful applicants are subject to the requirements of Wis. Stat. § 13.48(30). Successful applicants will demonstrate a clear and achievable plan to improve broadband communications services in one or more underserved areas in the State.</p>	
<p>Applicant Certification: In signing this application, the undersigned verifies under penalty of perjury that the Applicant and its employees and agents have not, either directly or indirectly, entered into any agreement or participated in any collusion or otherwise taken any action in restraint of free competition with respect to this application; that no attempt has been made to induce any other person or firm to submit or not to submit an application; that this application has been independently arrived at without collusion with any other proposer, competitor or potential competitor; that this application has not been knowingly disclosed prior to the opening of applications to any other applicant or competitor; that all of the responses and representations of Applicant in this application are true and correct to the best of the undersigned's knowledge, information, and belief; and that Applicant agrees to, accepts, and will comply with all of the terms and conditions respecting this application and any award of a broadband expansion grant as may be established in a grant award Agreement.</p>	
<p>Name of Authorized Representative (Type or Print)</p> <p>SHAWN SQUIRES</p>	<p>Title</p> <p>CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER</p>
<p>Phone</p> <p>608-248-2323</p>	
<p>Signature of Authorized Representative</p> 	<p>Date</p> <p>March 14, 2022</p>

SUMMARY OF GRANT APPLICATION

Primary Applicant Name Cochrane Cooperative Telephone Company	Amount of Broadband Grant Request (round to nearest dollar) \$3,000,000									
Federal Employer Identification No. 39-0274287	Amount of Matching Funds Pledged (round to nearest dollar) \$900,000									
Contact Name and Title Shawn Squires, Chief Executive Officer	Total Cost of Proposed Project (round to nearest dollar) \$3,900,000									
Telephone Number 608-248-2323	Project Name Town Of Buffalo									
E-mail Address(es) ssquires@mwt.net	Type of Proposed Broadband Service (FTTH, Cable, DSL, etc.) FTTH									
Grant Manager, if different than Primary Applicant Same As Above	Type of Proposed Project (Last-mile, Middle-Mile, backbone, other) Last Mile									
Grant Manager Contact Name Same As Above	Grant Manager Email Address and Telephone Number Same As Above									
<p>If the application proposes a public-private partnership, list the names, addresses, and FEINs of the partner companies or organizations</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Cochrane Cooperative Telephone Company</td> <td>FEIN# 39-0274287</td> <td>103 W 5th Street, PO Box 189, Cochrane, WI 54622</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Town of Buffalo</td> <td>FEIN# 39-1022472</td> <td>W394 Bluff Siding Road, Fountain City, WI 54629</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Buffalo County</td> <td>FEIN# 39-6005673</td> <td>407 S 2nd Street, PO Box 494, Alma, WI 54610</td> </tr> </table>		Cochrane Cooperative Telephone Company	FEIN# 39-0274287	103 W 5 th Street, PO Box 189, Cochrane, WI 54622	Town of Buffalo	FEIN# 39-1022472	W394 Bluff Siding Road, Fountain City, WI 54629	Buffalo County	FEIN# 39-6005673	407 S 2 nd Street, PO Box 494, Alma, WI 54610
Cochrane Cooperative Telephone Company	FEIN# 39-0274287	103 W 5 th Street, PO Box 189, Cochrane, WI 54622								
Town of Buffalo	FEIN# 39-1022472	W394 Bluff Siding Road, Fountain City, WI 54629								
Buffalo County	FEIN# 39-6005673	407 S 2 nd Street, PO Box 494, Alma, WI 54610								
<p>Brief Project Description (2 sentences)</p> <p>This is a joint project between Cochrane Cooperative Telephone Company (CCT), the Town of Buffalo, and Buffalo County, all in Buffalo County Wisconsin to propose a fiber to the home build out covering the complete Township of Buffalo.</p>										
Maximum Proposed Download Transmission Speed 1,000 Mbps	Maximum Proposed Upload Transmission Speed 1,000 Mbps									
Minimum Proposed Download Speed to Customer Location 50 Mbps	Minimum Proposed Upload Transmission Speed to Customer Location 50 Mbps									
County or Counties served by this project Buffalo	Community or Communities served by this project Town of Buffalo, Buffalo County, WI									
<p>List of the broadband service providers, if any, currently serving the area the applicant proposes to serve</p> <p>CenturyLink, Hiawatha Broadband Communications (HBC), LTD Broadband, US Cellular, HughesNet, Viasat, AT&T Mobility, Sprint, Verizon</p>										

Does proposed project serve an <i>unserved</i> area of the State, as defined in Section 1.4 of the application instruction? (yes/no) Yes	Is the Applicant certified as a Broadband Forward! Community or Telecommuter Forward! Community, or does the grant project propose to serve a Broadband Forward! Community or Telecommuter Forward! Community? (yes/no) Yes
For last mile projects or component the expected number of Business Locations that will have access to the improved broadband service (i.e., total business locations passed or with new service access). 83 business locations passed	For last mile projects or components the expected number of Residential Locations that will have access to the improved broadband service (i.e., total residential locations passed or with new service access). 353 residential locations passed
Of the improved business locations, how many locations are <i>unserved</i> ? 23 business locations	Of the improved residential locations, how many are <i>unserved</i> ? 83 residential locations
For providers that are eligible telecommunications carriers will the proposed broadband service be available to Lifeline customers? (yes/no) Yes	Are there any programs available for low-income households to access low-cost service or discounts? (yes/no) Yes
Is the internet service provider currently participating in the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program? (yes/no) No – Currently in the process of enrolling in the Affordable Connectivity Program	Is the internet service provider currently participating in the Department of Public Instruction and CESA purchasing's Digital Learning Bridge? (yes/no) Yes
Did the internet service provider participate in the Public Service Commission's voluntary Broadband Coverage Data Collection in 2021? (yes/no) Yes	

FY22 Broadband Expansion Grant Application

Budget & Income Summary



Please complete this form using Microsoft Excel. A PDF copy must be attached to your application as page four. In addition, this form must also be uploaded to ERF in Excel format.

Grant Summary

Grant Applicant:	Project:
Cochrane Cooperative Telephone Company	Town of Buffalo

Budget

Line:	Description / Category:	Grant Funds:	Match:	Total:
1	Contractual, Consultant Fees	\$ 3,000,000.00	\$ 557,000.00	\$ 3,557,000.00
2	Equipment		\$ 253,000.00	\$ 253,000.00
3	Supplies			\$ -
4	Labor (Salary, Fringe)		\$ 90,000.00	\$ 90,000.00
5	Permitting, Licensing Fees			\$ -
6	Travel			\$ -
7	Other			\$ -
Total:		\$ 3,000,000.00	\$ 900,000.00	\$ 3,900,000.00
				23.1% match requested

Pledged Contributions

#:	Entity:	Entity Type:	Pledge Type:	Pledge:
1	Cochrane Cooperative Telephone Company	Applicant	Cash	\$ 400,000.00
2	Town of Buffalo	Partner	Cash	\$ 400,000.00
3	Buffalo County	Partner	Cash	\$ 100,000.00
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
Total:				\$ 900,000.00

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Broadband Expansion Grant Application Narrative & Exhibits

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Executive Summary

Cochrane Cooperative Telephone Company (“CCT”) is a telecommunications cooperative located in Cochrane, Wisconsin. CCT is certified by the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (“Commission”) as an Incumbent Local Exchange Carrier (“ILEC”) to provide telecommunications service in Wisconsin along with being certified an Alternative Telecommunications Utility to provide telecommunications service in Wisconsin. CCT’s Public Service Commission of Wisconsin Utility number is 1230 and currently serves the Wisconsin study area number 330866.

CCT has been providing telecommunications service in its designated ILEC territory since 1905 making CCT the oldest telephone cooperative in the State of Wisconsin. In 2009, CCT started upgrading facilities with a 100% fiber to the home (“FTTH”) project that was completed in 2011. In 2015, CCT applied for their first WI PSC broadband grant for a FTTH buildout in the City of Alma, this grant was ultimately denied due to opposition by TDS. CCT pursued the buildout of the City of Alma anyway and has an 87% take rate for customers with service. As of today, TDS still has not offered FTTH services in the City of Alma. In 2018 & 2019, CCT entered into a public-private partnership with the Town of Milton to pursue a 100% FTTH buildout of the complete township. The Commission awarded grants to Phase 1 and Phase 2 with CCT’s applications scoring first in 2018. Over 300 locations now have FTTH in the Town of Milton at an 87% take rate. All of this was done in 1 year. In 2020, CCT applied for and was awarded over \$2 Million under the American Rescue Plan Act Broadband Access Grant to buildout to the Town of Cross. This project is currently under way with anticipated completion by the end of 2022.

In 2015, CCT was recognized as being a Gig Broadband Provider by National Telecommunications Cooperative Association (NTCA)-The Rural Broadband Association (“NTCA”). This means that the CCT network was tested and was certified capable of speeds up to 1 Gigabit per second (Gbps). This designation sets the communities CCT serves apart from others that do not have a provider capable of speeds up to 1 Gbps, which may help attract residents and businesses in the CCT service area. In 2018, CCT received designation as a Smart Rural Community by NTCA. CCT provides broadband internet access using a 100% Fiber to the Home (“FTTH”) throughout its ILEC and Competitive Local Exchange Carrier (“CLEC”) service areas. Broadband speeds of up to 1 Gigabit upload and 1 Gigabit download speeds are available throughout both ILEC and CLEC service territories. CCT continues to expand its fiber network to provide broadband service in unserved and underserved areas of Buffalo County along with continuing to upgrade and maintain its current facilities with advanced technology electronics. CCT has experienced staff in combination with strong finances to undertake projects.

CCT is applying for a FY2022 Broadband Expansion Grant (“Grant”) to extend its FTTH network in rural Buffalo County to approximately 436 locations in unserved/underserved areas in the Township of Buffalo (“Project” or “Township”). This Project proposes a FTTH network to Township of Buffalo locations all of which have **no** broadband providers providing **reliable** broadband speeds of 25Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload. CCT is projecting to provide service to approximately **106 unserved** locations. The Project will construct an approximate 57-mile fiber network covering around 34 square miles in the Township of Buffalo. See pages 5-7 for a detailed map of the Project area.

The estimated construction cost for the Project is \$3,900,000.00. The grant request in this application is \$3,000,000 or 77% of the new construction costs with \$900,000 or 23% coming from the following local sources: Township of Buffalo \$400,000, Buffalo County \$100,000, and CCT to cover the balance of the construction costs of approximately \$400,000.

The Township received requests from residents and businesses to find a provider or providers that will deliver affordable and reliable broadband service to the Township residents and businesses. Due to CCT’s past performance of successful buildouts in the City of Alma and Township of Milton as well as the recently awarded Town of Cross, the Township selected CCT to be their partner for the Project. This Project would provide service to around 436 locations in the grant application area. This project became feasible due to a previous award for the neighboring Township of Cross. This

pathway is what would allow this fiber buildout to succeed. This Project will be costly to construct due to multiple factors such as hilly, rocky terrain and the distance between subscriber locations as well as the increased cost for materials. The unserved/underserved area in the Project may never be served without this FY2022 Broadband Expansion Grant because of these factors.

The township is underserved (based on speed tests) with broadband service (as defined in section 1.4 of the Broadband Expansion Grant Application Instructions) by the incumbent telephone provider, CenturyLink. CenturyLink was contacted by the Town of Buffalo Broadband Committee in regards to their plans to upgrade service. An email response was received with a phone number to contact however the phone number provided was not a valid working number. Subsequent email correspondence has not been returned so contact was not able to be made. As of the date of this submission, still no response has been received. CCT is unaware of any official plans to provide wireline facility based broadband service to the Project area by any provider by December 31, 2025 which CCT estimates to be the deadline for projects to be completed.

To show their commitment to achieve their goal to get fiber to 100% of the residents and businesses, the Township has become a Certified Telecommuter Forward Community and also Certified Broadband Forward Community. In addition to these commitments, the Township is pledging \$400,000 toward this Project. Furthermore, Buffalo County also seeing the benefits to this Project has pledged \$100,000. As previously mentioned, CCT will cover any and all remaining costs which are estimated to be \$400,000.

FTTH is the perfect solution for this Project area as it has upside potential for broadband speeds which is almost unlimited. CCT would install technology called Gigabit Passive Optical Network ("GPON") which not only provides high speed broadband internet access but could also provide digital internet protocol (IP) based voice service. CCT will provide any speeds requested, but typical broadband speeds with internet access chosen by our customers are:

Download/Upload Mbps Service

- 50/50 for \$59.99
- 100/100 for \$89.99
- 250/250 for \$129.99
- 500/500 for \$149.99
- 1 GB/1 GB for \$199.99

Note that all services are provided with **NO** data caps or contracts

SECTION 3 – GENERAL APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

3.1 Application organization and format

The application should be typed. A handwritten application will not be accepted. The application, including the cover sheet, summary of grant application, budget and narrative is limited to 30 pages. Additional information, surveys, letters of support and agreements is not limited but the review panel will use only the first ten pages of attachments in developing the merit list.

3.2 Mandatory application requirements

3.2.1 Applicant identification and contact information

- a. The name and address of the entity applying for the grant, and the mailing address, telephone number and e-mail address of one or more contact persons representing the applicant.

Name of Entity: *Cochrane Cooperative Telephone Company*
Mailing Address: *103 West 5th Street*
 PO Box 189
 Cochrane, WI 54622
Phone Number: *608-248-2323*
Contacts: *Shawn Squires, CEO*
 ssquires@mwt.net

- b. If the application proposes a public-private partnership, the identity and contact information for all application partners.

1) Town of Buffalo

Town of Buffalo
Attn: Steve James, Town of Buffalo Chairman
W394 Bluff Siding Road
Fountain City, WI 54629
Phone: 608-687-7591
Email: tobchairman@gmail.com

2) Buffalo County

Buffalo County
Attn: Ryan VanDeWalle, Administrative Coordinator
407 South 2nd Street
PO Box 494
Alma, WI 54610
Phone: 608-685-6234
Email: ryan.vandewalle@co.buffalo.wi.us

- c. The application must show that the applicant is an organization, a telecommunications utility, or a city, village, town, or county that has established a legal partnership or joint venture arrangement with an otherwise qualified organization or telecommunications utility, and as such meets the eligibility requirements set forth in Wis. Stat. § 196.504(1).

Cochrane Cooperative Telephone Company ("CCT") is an Incumbent Local Exchange Carrier (ILEC) certified to provide telecommunications service in the State of Wisconsin pursuant to Wis. Stat.

196.50(2)(b). CCT's Public Service Commission of Wisconsin Utility number is 1230 and currently serves the NECA Cochrane, Wisconsin study area number 330866 Service Territory.

3.2.2 Description of the project

- a. A static map and description of the area of the State that will be affected by the proposed project.

The attached maps on page 5-7 shows the proposed broadband service area. The proposed area is located in the far southern portion of Buffalo County which is located in the west-central portion of the state and is in the Fountain City, WI rate center. The Project will provide broadband services to the entire township as shown on the map. As provided in the Executive Summary, this area is significantly underserved based on survey results of citizens.

- b. If the project area lies within a census block designated as served on the PSC Broadband Map, provide additional documentation to demonstrate the actual broadband service that is available in the proposed project area.

Table 1 – Town of Buffalo Served Census Block Data - Census Block ID: 550119605001037

Provider	Connection Type	Download Speed	Upload Speed
HBC	Fixed Wireless	60.0 Mbps	15.0 Mbps
T-Mobile	Fixed Wireless	25.0 Mbps	3.0 Mbps
US Cellular	Fixed Wireless	2.0 Mbps	.064 Mbps
HughesNet	Satellite	25.0 Mbps	3.0 Mbps
ViaSat	Satellite	100.0 Mbps	3.0 Mbps
VSat Systems LLC	Satellite	2.0 Mbps	1.0 Mbps
AT&T Mobility	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
Sprint	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
US Cellular	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
Verizon Wireless	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown

Table 2 – Town of Buffalo Served Census Block Data - Census Block ID: 550119605001038

Provider	Connection Type	Download Speed	Upload Speed
CenturyLink	ADSL	.512 Mbps	.256 Mbps
HBC	Fixed Wireless	60.0 Mbps	15.0 Mbps
T-Mobile	Fixed Wireless	25.0 Mbps	3.0 Mbps
US Cellular	Fixed Wireless	2.0 Mbps	.064 Mbps
HughesNet	Satellite	25.0 Mbps	3.0 Mbps
ViaSat	Satellite	100.0 Mbps	3.0 Mbps
VSat Systems LLC	Satellite	2.0 Mbps	1.0 Mbps
AT&T Mobility	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
Sprint	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
T-Mobile	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
US Cellular	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
Verizon Wireless	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown

Table 3 – Town of Buffalo Served Census Block Data - Census Block ID: 550119605001040

Provider	Connection Type	Download Speed	Upload Speed
HBC	Fixed Wireless	60.0 Mbps	15.0 Mbps
T-Mobile	Fixed Wireless	25.0 Mbps	3.0 Mbps
US Cellular	Fixed Wireless	2.0 Mbps	.064 Mbps
HughesNet	Satellite	25.0 Mbps	3.0 Mbps
ViaSat	Satellite	100.0 Mbps	3.0 Mbps
VSat Systems LLC	Satellite	2.0 Mbps	1.0 Mbps
AT&T Mobility	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
Sprint	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
US Cellular	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
Verizon Wireless	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown

Table 4 – Town of Buffalo Served Census Block Data - Census Block ID: 550119605001043

Provider	Connection Type	Download Speed	Upload Speed
CenturyLink	VDSL	10.0 Mbps	1.0 Mbps
HBC	Fixed Wireless	60.0 Mbps	15.0 Mbps
T-Mobile	Fixed Wireless	25.0 Mbps	3.0 Mbps
US Cellular	Fixed Wireless	2.0 Mbps	.064 Mbps
HughesNet	Satellite	25.0 Mbps	3.0 Mbps
ViaSat	Satellite	100.0 Mbps	3.0 Mbps
VSat Systems LLC	Satellite	2.0 Mbps	1.0 Mbps
AT&T Mobility	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
Sprint	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
T-Mobile	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
US Cellular	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
Verizon Wireless	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown

Table 5 – Town of Buffalo Served Census Block Data - Census Block ID: 550119605001044

Provider	Connection Type	Download Speed	Upload Speed
Century Link	VDSL	60.0 Mbps	5.0 Mbps
HBC	Fixed Wireless	60.0 Mbps	15.0 Mbps
T-Mobile	Fixed Wireless	25.0 Mbps	3.0 Mbps
US Cellular	Fixed Wireless	2.0 Mbps	.064 Mbps
HughesNet	Satellite	25.0 Mbps	3.0 Mbps
ViaSat	Satellite	100.0 Mbps	3.0 Mbps
VSat Systems LLC	Satellite	2.0 Mbps	1.0 Mbps
AT&T Mobility	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
Sprint	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
T-Mobile	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
US Cellular	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
Verizon Wireless	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown

Table 6 – Town of Buffalo Served Census Block Data - Census Block ID: 550119605001046

Provider	Connection Type	Download Speed	Upload Speed
CenturyLink	VDSL	60.0 Mbps	5.0 Mbps
HBC	Fixed Wireless	60.0 Mbps	15.0 Mbps
T-Mobile	Fixed Wireless	25.0 Mbps	3.0 Mbps
US Cellular	Fixed Wireless	2.0 Mbps	.064 Mbps
HughesNet	Satellite	25.0 Mbps	3.0 Mbps
ViaSat	Satellite	100.0 Mbps	3.0 Mbps
VSat Systems LLC	Satellite	2.0 Mbps	1.0 Mbps
AT&T Mobility	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
Sprint	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
T-Mobile	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
US Cellular	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
Verizon Wireless	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown

Table 7 – Town of Buffalo Served Census Block Data - Census Block ID: 550119605001048

Provider	Connection Type	Download Speed	Upload Speed
HBC	Fixed Wireless	60.0 Mbps	15.0 Mbps
T-Mobile	Fixed Wireless	25.0 Mbps	3.0 Mbps
US Cellular	Fixed Wireless	2.0 Mbps	.064 Mbps
HughesNet	Satellite	25.0 Mbps	3.0 Mbps
ViaSat	Satellite	100.0 Mbps	3.0 Mbps
VSat Systems LLC	Satellite	2.0 Mbps	1.0 Mbps
AT&T Mobility	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
Sprint	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
US Cellular	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
Verizon Wireless	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown

Table 8 – Town of Buffalo Served Census Block Data - Census Block ID: 550119605001049

Provider	Connection Type	Download Speed	Upload Speed
CenturyLink	VDSL	15.0 Mbps	.768 Mbps
HBC	Fixed Wireless	60.0 Mbps	15.0 Mbps
T-Mobile	Fixed Wireless	25.0 Mbps	3.0 Mbps
US Cellular	Fixed Wireless	2.0 Mbps	.064 Mbps
HughesNet	Satellite	25.0 Mbps	3.0 Mbps
ViaSat	Satellite	100.0 Mbps	3.0 Mbps
VSat Systems LLC	Satellite	2.0 Mbps	1.0 Mbps
AT&T Mobility	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
Sprint	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
T-Mobile	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
US Cellular	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
Verizon Wireless	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown

Table 9 – Town of Buffalo Served Census Block Data - Census Block ID: 550119605001051

Provider	Connection Type	Download Speed	Upload Speed
HBC	Fixed Wireless	60.0 Mbps	15.0 Mbps
T-Mobile	Fixed Wireless	25.0 Mbps	3.0 Mbps
HughesNet	Satellite	25.0 Mbps	3.0 Mbps
ViaSat	Satellite	100.0 Mbps	3.0 Mbps
VSat Systems LLC	Satellite	2.0 Mbps	1.0 Mbps
AT&T Mobility	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
Sprint	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
T-Mobile	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
Verizon Wireless	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown

Table 10 – Town of Buffalo Served Census Block Data - Census Block ID: 550119605001056

Provider	Connection Type	Download Speed	Upload Speed
CenturyLink	Fiber to End User	20.0 Mbps	1.5 Mbps
HBC	Fixed Wireless	60.0 Mbps	15.0 Mbps
T-Mobile	Fixed Wireless	25.0 Mbps	3.0 Mbps
US Cellular	Fixed Wireless	2.0 Mbps	.064 Mbps
HughesNet	Satellite	25.0 Mbps	3.0 Mbps
ViaSat	Satellite	100.0 Mbps	3.0 Mbps
VSat Systems LLC	Satellite	2.0 Mbps	1.0 Mbps
AT&T Mobility	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
Sprint	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
T-Mobile	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
US Cellular	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
Verizon Wireless	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown

Table 11 – Town of Buffalo Served Census Block Data - Census Block ID: 550119605001060

Provider	Connection Type	Download Speed	Upload Speed
CenturyLink	VDSL	10.0 Mbps	1.0 Mbps
HBC	Fixed Wireless	60.0 Mbps	15.0 Mbps
T-Mobile	Fixed Wireless	25.0 Mbps	3.0 Mbps
US Cellular	Fixed Wireless	2.0 Mbps	.064 Mbps
HughesNet	Satellite	25.0 Mbps	3.0 Mbps
ViaSat	Satellite	100.0 Mbps	3.0 Mbps
VSat Systems LLC	Satellite	2.0 Mbps	1.0 Mbps
AT&T Mobility	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
Sprint	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
T-Mobile	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
US Cellular	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
Verizon Wireless	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown

Table 12 – Town of Buffalo Served Census Block Data - Census Block ID: 550119605001066

Provider	Connection Type	Download Speed	Upload Speed
CenturyLink	VDSL	10.0 Mbps	1.0 Mbps
HBC	Fixed Wireless	60.0 Mbps	15.0 Mbps
T-Mobile	Fixed Wireless	25.0 Mbps	3.0 Mbps
US Cellular	Fixed Wireless	2.0 Mbps	.064 Mbps
HughesNet	Satellite	25.0 Mbps	3.0 Mbps
ViaSat	Satellite	100.0 Mbps	3.0 Mbps
VSat Systems LLC	Satellite	2.0 Mbps	1.0 Mbps
AT&T Mobility	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
Sprint	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
T-Mobile	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
US Cellular	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
Verizon Wireless	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown

Table 13 – Town of Buffalo Served Census Block Data - Census Block ID: 550119605001081

Provider	Connection Type	Download Speed	Upload Speed
CenturyLink	ADSL	10.0 Mbps	1.0 Mbps
HBC	Fixed Wireless	60.0 Mbps	15.0 Mbps
T-Mobile	Fixed Wireless	25.0 Mbps	3.0 Mbps
US Cellular	Fixed Wireless	2.0 Mbps	.064 Mbps
HughesNet	Satellite	25.0 Mbps	3.0 Mbps
ViaSat	Satellite	100.0 Mbps	3.0 Mbps
VSat Systems LLC	Satellite	2.0 Mbps	1.0 Mbps
AT&T Mobility	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
Sprint	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
T-Mobile	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
US Cellular	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
Verizon Wireless	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown

Table 14 – Town of Buffalo Served Census Block Data - Census Block ID: 550119605001082

Provider	Connection Type	Download Speed	Upload Speed
CenturyLink	ADSL	10.0 Mbps	.768 Mbps
HBC	Fixed Wireless	60.0 Mbps	15.0 Mbps
T-Mobile	Fixed Wireless	25.0 Mbps	3.0 Mbps
US Cellular	Fixed Wireless	2.0 Mbps	.064 Mbps
HughesNet	Satellite	25.0 Mbps	3.0 Mbps
ViaSat	Satellite	100.0 Mbps	3.0 Mbps
VSat Systems LLC	Satellite	2.0 Mbps	1.0 Mbps
AT&T Mobility	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
Sprint	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
T-Mobile	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
US Cellular	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown
Verizon Wireless	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown

Data Sources:

- WI Public Service Commission Broadband Map Updated 2/22/2022
- U.S. Census – 2020 Census Block Data

*The above tables summarize the advertised speeds in the Project area that is currently marked as served by the Wisconsin PSC Broadband Map updated 2/22/2022. However as shown in the Town of Buffalo Broadband Survey Executive Summary on pages 9-10, **NO** provider is able to consistently provide 25/3 Mbps, which by definition in section 1.4 of the Broadband Expansion Grant Application instructions, is the definition of broadband service. For example, a local restaurant's address of W124 State Highway 35/54 was input into CenturyLink's Small Business service finder. CenturyLink's website indicated that this address could get up to 15 Mbps download and .75 Mbps upload however this area according to the map is served and CenturyLink is reporting this location's area with 60 Mbps download and 5 Mbps upload. Another example is with the address S3414 County Road M. CenturyLink's website indicates that they do not provide service at this location however the map shows it is served with 60 Mbps/5 Mbps. The inaccurate reporting is obvious with the results of the survey taken by the Township. The Town of Buffalo should not be overlooked due to the inaccuracy of the mapping in regards to served areas.*

- c. An explanation of how the proposed project will increase broadband access. Include information about the:
- Potential and expected number of households served, including number of unserved and underserved locations.
 - Potential and expected number of businesses served, including number of unserved and underserved locations.
 - Expected number of seasonal residents and tourists served.
 - Estimated download and upload speed of the broadband service packages available for purchase.

This proposed project would increase broadband access as follows:

- 1) *Provide high speed broadband to areas where very limited low speed broadband service or where no service is currently available to end user customers.*
- 2) *Potential and expected number of households served:*
 - a. *Potential households in unserved area are 83. According to the Town of Buffalo Broadband Survey, 28% of respondents who indicated that they did not have internet access said it was because internet was not available or options were too slow. According to CenturyLink's website, this is confirmed by searching S3414 County Road M and S3353 Brandhorst Road, both residential addresses located in the Town of Buffalo, shows that no internet service is available but is considered served based on the WI PSC Broadband Map updated 2/22/2022.*
 - b. *Of the 353 total household locations that could be served, it is estimated based on similar take rates in other buildouts, as well as other factors, that 275 households are projected to subscribe.*
- 3) *Potential and expected number of businesses served:*

- a. *Potential households in unserved area are 23. According to the Town of Buffalo Broadband Survey, 28% of respondents who indicated that they did not have internet access said it was because internet was not available or options were too slow. According to CenturyLink's website, this is confirmed by searching S3444 County Road M, a business address located in the Town of Buffalo, which shows that no internet service is available but is considered served based on the WI PSC Broadband Map updated 2/22/2022.*
 - b. *Of the 83 business locations that could be served it is estimated based on similar take rates in other buildouts, as well as other factors, that 65 businesses are projected to subscribe, most of which include agriculture and poultry farms.*
- 4) *Expected number of seasonal residents and tourists served.*
- a. *Of the 353 total households, 13 locations were identified as seasonal residents that could be served, it is estimated based on similar take rates in other buildouts, as well as other factors, that 10 seasonal residents are projected to subscribe. It should be noted that families who have vacation properties in the Buffalo County area acquire properties for hunting, fishing, and general recreation. By offering quality, high-speed broadband, may allow these families have much longer stays such as multiple weeks instead of just a weekend due to being connected. Families may even consider making their property a permanent home again due to the availability of services that may not be offered in communities they live in.*
 - b. *In addition to seasonal residents, the township has a modest tourism economic impact. The township has a multi-use walking/biking trail named "The Flyway Trail" created in 2020 utilizing an old railroad bed along with a historic bridge over the backwaters of the Mississippi River which links up to Winona, Minnesota (population approximately 27,000). The Flyway Trail was completed in partnership with Buffalo County and the State of Wisconsin and is approximately 6.6 miles long. On any given day in the summer months there are approximately 100 users who use this trail and on weekends use can soar to around 200 users. The trailhead is also the Town of Buffalo Town Hall and Park. CCT, if approved by the Town of Buffalo, would offer public Wi-Fi at their Town Hall. This would allow tourists the opportunity to check email, upload pictures/videos, conduct video calls, etc. enhancing their experience of the trail as well as the community by keeping them connected.*

Another popular tourist location is called Kinstone. Kinstone is a land restoration and human rejuvenation project. This 30-acre site is a modern megalithic garden on the bluffs overlooking the Mississippi River in the Driftless Region of Western Wisconsin. People come to enjoy peace and tranquility along with enjoying the smells of the prairie grasses and flowers. Many individuals rent the location for retreats, yoga, meditation, and weddings. By offering a quality high-speed internet service, this organization can expand its business to include other services such as virtual tours or virtual sessions.

Room 2 Roam is a one-of-a-kind lodging experience (if they so choose). Room 2 Roam allows their visitors to simply stay in a 5 bedroom, 2 story farm house for the views, sights, sounds, and smells of a dairy farm however they allow their guests to take it a

step further. Visitors can also enjoy viewing or helping out milking, taking hay rides, and assist with farm chores. The purpose is not only to allow visitors a true farm experience but also to learn about land conservation. Room 2 Roam has approximately 25 families that visit each year with some coming from outside the country. When away from home on business or pleasure, people want to stay connected and by having access to high-speed internet for their guests will make the customer's experience that much more rewarding.

5) *CCT will provide broadband internet access with a minimum speed of 50 Mbps down and 50 Mbps up where in many households only broadband speeds of less than 25 Mbps down are available. Broadband speeds greater than the minimum speeds will be available to all customers. Speeds of up to 1 Gbps down and 1 Gbps up will be available to all customers. Should a household or business request service in excess of 1 Gbps, CCT would provide whatever speed was requested.*

- d. A statement whether the proposed project is targeting the "last mile," "middle mile," or backbone portion of the broadband infrastructure.

The proposed project is targeted for last mile of the broadband infrastructure. CCT is currently providing wireline broadband service and has access to adequate middle mile and backbone Internet access.

- e. A description of the broadband service to be provided, including estimated download and upload speeds, whether the speed is based on dedicated or shared bandwidth, and the technology that will be used. This description may be illustrated by a map or schematic diagram, as appropriate.

CCT is currently providing wireline broadband service using a 100% fiber to the home network in its current ILEC and CLEC territories. CCT will provide dedicated broadband service using a fiber to the home network in the Town of Buffalo. FTTH is the perfect solution for this Project area as it has upside potential for broadband speeds which is almost unlimited. CCT would install technology called Gigabit Passive Optical Network ("GPON") which not only provides high speed broadband internet access but could also provide digital internet protocol (IP) based voice service. This fiber network will be connected to the existing fiber network and broadband electronics used to provide dedicated broadband service in the CCT service territories.

With this fiber to the home build, over 346 locations will for the first time have access to minimum broadband speeds of 50 Mbps download and 50 Mbps upload up to 1 Gbps or more using dedicated broadband transport facilities and the latest electronics technologies. The fiber network will also make broadband services available to the following tourist destinations:

- Flyway Bike Trail (Town of Buffalo Town Hall to WI/MN State Line)*
- Room 2 Roam (VRBO)*
- Kinestone (Museum)*
- Restaurants (Willow Wind Farm, Hillside Fish House)*

- f. For middle mile projects:

Not applicable for this project

- g. A schedule by which the applicant intends to complete the components of the proposed project. The project period is up to 24 months.

If the grant application for the Project is approved by July 2022, CCT is proposing the following schedule:

- Order Equipment & Agreements with Contractors	July 2022
- Engineering, Staking, & Environmental Work	August – November 2022
- Open Meetings for Digital Literacy Education	February – March 2023
- Signup for Services	March – April 2023
- Bury Cable & Install Mainline	April – June 2023
- Install all electronics & activate services	July – October 2023

3.2.3 Itemized Budget (all amounts should be rounded to the nearest dollar)

- a. In addition to the Summary of Project Budget that is included as page 3, applicants should include a price list or quote for any equipment the applicant intends to purchase, including capital expenditures. The application should also indicate whether any facilities involved would be owned, rented, or leased.

The Project expenses will be for the construction costs for 100% fiber network. All fiber construction will be performed by a third-party contractor. Installation of service will be by a third-party contractor as well as CCT staff. All facilities involved in this Project will be owned entirely by Cochrane Cooperative Telephone Company.

• Contractual/Consultant Expenses:	\$3,557,000
- Contractor buried last mile fiber network consisting of 12 to 288 fiber strand cable including splicing, manholes, and handholes	
- Engineering of Project	
- Environmental Review, Permits, Rights of Way	
- Installation Crew	
• Equipment	\$253,000
- Splitters, Cabinets, and Vaults	
- Electronics and Optical Network Terminals	
• Labor (Salary ONLY, No Fringes)	<u>\$90,000</u>
- CCT employee hourly wages only. No fringe benefits	
TOTAL CONSTRUCTION COSTS BUDGET	<u>\$3,900,000</u>

- b. The application must show that the grant, if awarded, will not subsidize the expenses of a telecommunications provider or the monthly bills of telecommunications customers. For purposes of this grant program, subsidize means a contribution to the operating costs, including profit, of the telecommunications provider.

The grant funds requested in this application will not subsidize the expense to provide telecommunications services to end user customers. The grant funds requested in this

application will only be used to help pay for a portion of the fiber network and electronics used to provide broadband service. No grant funds will be used for monthly recurring operating costs for broadband or telecommunications services.

- c. The application must show that the grant funds requested will be used for the sole purpose of constructing broadband infrastructure in the underserved areas covered by the application. Construction of broadband infrastructure may include any of the following:
- Project planning that takes place during the performance period.
 - Obtaining construction permits.
 - Construction of facilities, including construction of both “middle mile” and “last mile” infrastructure.
 - Installation and testing of the broadband service.

CCT feels that the entire Project area is considered as unserved or underserved based upon the speed tests conducted by residents and businesses as part of the survey process. Grant funds requested in this application will only be used to help pay for a portion of the last-mile fiber network and electronics used to provide broadband service. No grant funds will be used for monthly recurring operating costs for broadband or telecommunications services. CCT anticipates that most project planning, engineering, and securing permits may occur outside of the performance period of the agreement and therefore are committed to funding those expenses.

3.2.4 Priority factors supporting the application

- a. **Matching funds.** A description of the matching funds the applicant will invest in the proposed project, if any. For each element, indicate the type of match (cash, salary expense, or in-kind contribution). If the application is submitted by a partnership, identify the partner responsible for providing each element of the proposed matching funds. *Note: The requirement for this information is satisfied via inclusion of the completed Funding Statement as page 4 of the application.*
- If available, provide documentation to support an offer of matching funds (minutes of a town board meeting, a letter from a prospective customer or local government official, etc.).
 - Matching funds contributions must be a firm commitment of funding to the project. Contributions that vary based on the amount of actual sales, customer contributions, or other criteria will not be given weight.

The grant amount being requested is \$3,000,000 which is about 77% of the construction project. All matching funds will be cash. Matching funds of \$400,000 has been obtained from the Township of Buffalo and incorporated into the Public-Private Partnership Agreement. A copy of the agreement is provided in Exhibit A. In addition, Buffalo County has agreed to provide \$100,000 in funding for the Project. A copy of the funding commitment letter is provided in Exhibit B. Cochrane Cooperative Telephone will fund the remaining amount estimated to be \$400,000.

- b. **Public-private partnerships.** If the public-private partnership is memorialized in a joint venture agreement or other writing, provide a copy of that agreement. If the partnership has not been reduced to a written agreement, provide a short description of the management role, financial commitment, or other contribution to the project for each participating partner.

This application does propose a public-private partnership with the Town of Buffalo. A copy of the private-partnership agreement is provided in Exhibit A. The Town of Buffalo has spent several months, along with countless meetings in preparation for this partnership. The Town of Buffalo has passed a resolution to support this Project by:

- 1) The Town of Buffalo will contribute \$400,000 in cash and is contingent upon receiving the grant funding.*
- 2) Town of Buffalo is certified as a Broadband Forward Community as well as Telecommuter Forward. A copy of both certifications is provided as Exhibit D.*
- 3) Town of Buffalo will assist in the public education and outreach for this Project along with waiving fees for permitting, zoning, and easements.*
- 4) Buffalo County will contribute \$100,000 in cash and is contingent upon receiving the grant funding. A copy of the funding letter of commitment is provided as Exhibit B.*

c. **Existing broadband service.** A list of the broadband service providers, if any, currently serving the area the applicant proposes to serve. In scoring this element, the following factors will be taken into account:

- Provide a list of all landline broadband service providers (DSL, cable or fiber to the home) and fixed wireless broadband service providers that overlap the footprint of the proposed broadband project.
- If known, provide an estimate of the customers within the proposed footprint that are served by competing landline and fixed wireless broadband service providers, and the download/upload speeds offered by those competing service providers.

Table 15 – Town of Buffalo Wireline & Wireless Providers

Provider	Connection Type	Download Speed	Upload Speed	Customers
CenturyLink	ADSL	.50 Mbps	.25 Mbps	See Below
CenturyLink	ADSL	.512 Mbps	.256 Mbps	
CenturyLink	VDSL	1.50 Mbps	.50 Mbps	
CenturyLink	VDSL	3.0 Mbps	.50 Mbps	
CenturyLink	VDSL	6.0 Mbps	.512 Mbps	
CenturyLink	VDSL	10.0 Mbps	.768 Mbps	
Century Link	VDSL	15.0 Mbps	.768 Mbps	
CenturyLink	VDSL	60.0 Mbps	5.0 Mbps	
CenturyLink	Fiber to End User	20.0 Mbps	1.50 Mbps	
HBC	Fixed Wireless	60.0 Mbps	15.0 Mbps	
T-Mobile	Fixed Wireless	25.0 Mbps	3.0 Mbps	
US Cellular	Fixed Wireless	2.0 Mbps	.064 Mbps	

Source: WI Public Service Commission Broadband Map Updated 2/22/2022

Note: HBC is the only provider listed in the above table that covers 100% of the Project. All of the remaining provider cover only portions of the Project. T-Mobile covers approximately ½ of the township diagonally from the northwest to the southeast. US Cellular covers approximately all but the eastern 1/8 of the project area.

The Town of Buffalo Broadband Survey asked the question in regards to who provides internet service to your home? A summary of the responses are as follows: 51% CenturyLink, 25% Hiawatha Broadband Communications (HBC), 13% ViaSat, 9% HughesNet, 2% Cellular Hotspot.

The above table summarizes the advertised speeds in the Project area that are indicated by providers on the Wisconsin PSC Broadband Map updated 2/22/2022. **However as shown in the Town of Buffalo Broadband Survey Executive Summary on pages 9-10, NO provider is able to consistently provide 25/3 Mbps, which by definition in section 1.4 of the Broadband Expansion Grant Application instructions, is the definition of broadband service. For example, a local restaurant's address of W124 State Highway 35/54 was input into CenturyLink's Small Business service finder. CenturyLink's website indicated that this address could get up to 15 Mbps download and .75 Mbps upload however this area according to the map is served and CenturyLink is reporting this location's area with 60 Mbps download and 5 Mbps upload. Another example is with the address S3414 County Road M. CenturyLink's website indicates that they do not provide service at this location however the map shows it is served with 60 Mbps/5 Mbps. The inaccurate reporting is obvious with the results of the survey taken by the Township. The Town of Buffalo should not be overlooked due to the inaccuracy of the mapping in regards to served areas.**

- Provide a list of mobile wireless broadband service providers that overlap the footprint of the proposed project.

See Table 16 – Town of Buffalo Mobile Wireless Providers below

- If known, provide an estimate of the customers within the proposed footprint that are served by competing mobile wireless broadband service providers, and the download/upload speeds offered by those competing service providers. (The presence of existing mobile wireless providers does not contribute to or affect the evaluation of existing broadband service in the project area for purposes of priority consideration, but provides a more complete picture of the broadband options available to residents.)

Table 16 – Town of Buffalo Mobile Wireless Providers

Provider	Connection Type	Download Speed	Upload Speed	Customers
AT&T Mobility	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown	See Below
Sprint	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown	
T-Mobile	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown	
US Cellular	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown	
Verizon	Mobile Wireless	Unknown	Unknown	

Source: WI Public Service Commission Broadband Map Updated 2/22/2022

Note: AT&T Mobility covers approximately all but the northeastern 1/4 of the Project, Sprint covers approximately all but the northeastern 1/4 of the Project, T-Mobile covers approximately the northwestern, western, southwestern, and southern 1/3 of the Project, US Cellular covers approximately the southeastern 1/4 of the Project, and Verizon covers approximately the northwestern, western, southwestern, and southern 1/3 of the Project.

Based upon the broadband survey, approximately 2% of survey respondents indicated that they use their mobile wireless provider hotspot as their means of broadband service. Wireless service is spotty at best in many locations within the township due to the hilly terrain with steep valleys. Wireless service is not a viable option for residents because of this. Please consider the above information when reviewing this application as it pertains to mobile wireless service quality.

- d. **Project impact.** A description of the geographic area and the population, both in terms of absolute numbers and likely users, which will be served by the proposed project. Indicate the number of anticipated residential and business customers in the project area, if known. Explain the speed and quality of internet service that will be available. Include information about the range of packages available for purchase. Provide details on any low-income access programs and steps the project will take to support adoption.

The geographic area served by this application is in a very rural area of Wisconsin running along Highway 35 & 35/54 and the Mississippi River. The Town of Buffalo has about 353 resident addresses along with 83 businesses.

Based on resident and business customers that participated in the Town of Buffalo survey, about 90% of customers indicated that they will sign up and retain a CCT broadband service.

CCT at the time of submission currently does not participate in the Affordable Connectivity Program however application materials are currently being prepared. This will allow customers who meet the designated threshold access to discounted services.

- e. **Scalability.** A description of how the proposed project could expand or improve the broadband service it delivers, while maintaining the quality of its broadband service. This description should include specific projected increases in the following parameters that are known at the time of the application:

- The number of users.
- The number of network nodes.
- The number of services provided.
- The geographic area served by the project.
- The number of aggregation points in middle mile project.

This description may also include a discussion of possible growth potential that is outside the commitment the applicant is making as part of its application.

The CCT broadband project as described in this application will bring a Fiber-to-the-Home network to around 436 locations in the Town of Buffalo, Buffalo County, Wisconsin by December 2023. The broadband service will provide both residential and business customers in the Town of Buffalo the broadband speeds they need to be connected at very reasonable costs.

This Project is not just centered on the more populated areas of the township. The total Project is focused on a more rural area adjacent to our previous CLEC project of the Town of Cross.

This Project could be a pathway into the City of Fountain City (both outlying areas as well as the city proper) or into the Townships of Dodge and Trempealeau in Trempealeau County

- f. **Economic development.** A description of how the proposed project will promote job growth or retention, expand the property tax base or improve the overall economic vitality of the municipality or region. This description may be supplemented with a letter from one or more persons discussing the potential economic impact the project could have for that individual or business.

Please see Exhibit E for Buffalo County Economic Development Letter of Support

Telecommuting – Within Buffalo County (which borders Minnesota) telecommuting is a popular avenue for employment. This area can now become a telecommuting focused area by promoting that both residents and business owners can work from their home to business locations. Buffalo County Economic Development Department has been utilizing telecommuting as a draw for economic development in recent years. This project would further strengthen this message as another township would be served with fiber to the home by a company with a strong reputation of providing quality, high-speed broadband at a reasonable price.

Tourism – The township has a multi-use walking/biking trail named The Flyway Trail created in 2020 utilizing an old railroad bed along with a historic bridge over the backwaters of the Mississippi River which links up to Winona, Minnesota (Population around 27,000). The Flyway Trail was completed in partnership with Buffalo County and the State of Wisconsin and is approximately 6.6 miles long. On any given day in the summer months there are approximately 100 users who use this trail and on weekends use can soar to around 200 users. Users are a mix of local, regional, and tourists and because of this trail's proximity to the Great River State Trail, approximately 2.5 miles away, users may proceed to that trail. Planning is currently underway to complete phase 2 of the trail which would extend the current trail to the Great River State Trail by creating an off-road trail similar to the existing trail. As mentioned previously, another popular tourist location is called Kinstone. Kinstone is a land restoration and human rejuvenation project. This 30-acre site is a modern megalithic garden on the bluffs overlooking the Mississippi River in the Driftless Region of Western Wisconsin. People come to enjoy peace and tranquility along with enjoying the smells of the prairie grasses and flowers. Many individuals rent the location for retreats, yoga, meditation, and weddings. Room 2 Roam is a farm experience-based lodging facility within the township offering visitors a unique experience while staying at a 5 bedroom, 2 story farm home.

New and Existing Businesses – The township has two state highways that pass through the township, State Highways (“STH”) 35 and 54. Traffic data reports from the Department of Transportation show that on average 7,000 vehicles per day travel on STH 35/54 which begins at the STH 35 and STH 54 intersection south to the Town/County line. STH 54 which starts at the Minnesota/Wisconsin border east until the intersection with STH 35 has about 9,300 vehicles per day and STH 35 which proceeds north from the STH 54 intersection carries approximately 5,800 vehicles per day. The access to major arteries of roads is key to the success of many businesses regardless of size. In addition to this, being so close to a sizeable city like Winona, MN also makes establishing a business in the Town of Buffalo smart because it will be easy to attract residents from there due to the proximity. The Township of Buffalo has multiple vast sections of land which could promote a larger based facility to move or establish their business in the township. Being so close to Winona has been proven effective over the years as many local businesses have vehicles with Minnesota license plates parked in front of their businesses.

- g. **Effect upon broadband service to adjacent areas.** A description of whether the proposed project will or will not impair the ability of a broadband service provider or competing broadband service provider to extend broadband service to areas adjacent to the proposed project area.

The proposed project will not impair the ability of a broadband service provider providing broadband service in an adjacent area. To the west and southwest, the Project area is bordered by the Mississippi River and Minnesota with the only access point across the Highway 54 bridge. That area is very well served by local and national telecommunications companies. To the east, the Project area is bordered by the Trempealeau River with access points across the State Highway 35/54 bridge and the County Road P bridge into Dodge, WI. The Wisconsin PSC Broadband map shows this entire area as an ILEC area for CenturyLink. To the northeast, the Project area is bordered by the City of Fountain City which the Wisconsin PSC Broadband map shows as served by ILEC provider CenturyLink and Charter Communications. To the north, CCT has been awarded a broadband expansion grant for the Town of Cross which is currently underway. The Town of Cross project is why CCT feels that the Town of Buffalo Project is feasible. The Project area will not delay the buildout of services by another provider, the Project starts in a very rural area not within a city or within a shorter distance of a central office. The Project focuses on those in need of a quality broadband service that would not receive it unless grant funds were available.

3.2.5 Other information supporting the application

- a. A description of applicant's history or experience constructing broadband communications facilities in the State and elsewhere.

Please see the Executive Summary on page 9 and 10. Cochrane Cooperative Telephone Company has established a proven track record when it comes to broadband projects. CCT became fiber to the home in 2011 and most recently was awarded broadband grant opportunities in 2018 and 2019 Town of Milton Projects as well as the 2021 award for the Town of Cross. CCT has tremendous relationships with contractors which allows for projects to be started and completed as timely as possible.

- b. A description of how the proposed project will or will not duplicate existing broadband infrastructure.

*In the Project area, there is large section of about 19 square miles (census blocks are listed above in section 3.2.2) according to the WI PSC Broadband Map updated as of 2/22/2022 that is currently served by wireline, fixed wireless, or satellite access with speeds that meet the broadband definition as outlined in the grant application instructions. CCT disputes this information because as shown in the Town of Buffalo Broadband Survey, no provider meets this definition and therefore, CCT feels that the entire township would not be duplicating any broadband infrastructure. Based on the Town of Buffalo Broadband Survey, respondents received faster service through satellite service than through their incumbent provider, CenturyLink. **In fact, based on the survey, 2% of respondents could not even do a speed test because their service was too slow.** Furthermore, CenturyLink has not been able to provide any assurance of availability of Fiber-to-the-Home in regards to the township.*

- c. A description of an applicant's financial ability to undertake the proposed broadband construction project. This may include information such as the number of years the company has been in operation, documentation of successful completion of similar infrastructure projects, evidence that sufficient funds are available to cover project expenditure and match, customer turn-over rates, and credit rating.

CCT has been providing telecommunications service in its designated ILEC territory since 1905 making CCT the oldest telephone cooperative in the State of Wisconsin. In 2009 CCT started upgrading facilities with a 100% fiber to the home ("FTTH") project that was completed in 2011.

In 2015, CCT was recognized as being a Gig Broadband Provider by National Telecommunications Cooperative Association (NTCA)-The Rural Broadband Association ("NTCA"). This means our network was tested and was certified capable of speeds up to 1 Gigabit per second (Gbps). These designations set our communities apart from others that do not have a provider capable of speeds up to 1 Gbps, which may help attract residents and businesses to the communities we serve. In 2018 CCT received designation as a Smart Rural Community by NTCA.

In 2015, CCT applied for their first WI PSC broadband grant for a FTTH buildout in the City of Alma, this grant was ultimately denied due to opposition by TDS. CCT pursued their buildout of the City of Alma anyway and has an 87% take rate for customers with service. As of today, TDS still has not offered FTTH services in the City of Alma.

In 2018 & 2019, CCT entered into a public-private partnership with the Town of Milton to pursue a 100% FTTH buildout of the complete township. The Commission awarded grants to Phase 1 and Phase 2 with CCT's applications scoring number one the first year. Over 300 locations now have FTTH at an 87% take rate. The Town of Milton was completed within 1 year.

In 2020, CCT applied for and was awarded over \$2 Million under the American Rescue Plan Act Broadband Access Grant to buildout to the Town of Cross. This project is currently under way with anticipated completed by the end of 2022.

CCT continues to expand its fiber network to provide broadband service in unserved and underserved areas of Buffalo County along with continuing to upgrade and maintain its current facilities with advanced technology electronics. CCT has experienced staff in combination with strong finances to undertake projects.

- d. A description of how the proposed project will affect the ability of individuals to access health care service from home, including any impact upon the costs of those services.

All customers that request CCT broadband services will have more than adequate broadband speed available to have access to tele-health from their home. Although close to Winona Health (located across the river in Winona, MN) the Town of Buffalo is still approximately an hour plus drive to specialized medical care for complex medical situations. This in combination with the less than adequate speeds available make any kind of virtual healthcare options non-existent. This broadband project will help reduce health care costs for transportation to medical facilities and office visit charges and provide faster response times. Customers will also be able to take advantage of online health monitoring applications. Such online services include: blood pressure monitoring, blood clot monitoring, oversight of insulin and pain pumps, in-home cancer treatments, exercise and diet monitoring, adjustment to pacemakers and other heart monitors,

and monitoring of diseases. In addition, those veterans who reside in this rural area have far distances to travel to reach a VA Medical Facility will be able to subscribe to a high-speed service that would allow for video conferencing especially for those who suffer from mental health conditions. It should be noted that the median age for Town of Buffalo residents is between 50-65 year of age. In fact, in total, 74% of survey respondents indicated they were 50+ years of age. CCT also plans to create a public Wi-Fi location at the Town of Buffalo Town Hall that will allow individuals who cannot afford broadband, even after discounts/programs, the ability to utilize it for any of the previously mentioned medical processes.

- e. A description of how the proposed project will affect the ability of students to access educational opportunities from home.

See Letter of Support from the Cochrane-Fountain City School District in Exhibit E.

*Customers that request CCT broadband services will be pleased to know that **all** students in the household will have more than adequate broadband speeds for all homework assignments, research, and access to educational opportunities. Also, online undergraduate and graduate education programs will become an option for town residents. All of this will be available at very reasonable pricing as provided in the Executive Summary. Cochrane-Fountain City School District which covers the entire Project area utilizes Google Chromebooks for students. This Project will allow students the opportunity to utilize the Google Docs program once they leave the classroom. Current enrolled college students will have the option of saving money and telecommuting to school instead of having to live on campus or in the community of their campus in order to complete their education. CCT will be promoting the Affordable Connectivity Program to the school as well as the existing customers once approved. This will allow families the opportunity to receive a quality service at a reduced price. CCT also plans to request permission from the Town of Buffalo to install a public Wi-Fi location at the Town of Buffalo Town Hall that will allow those families who are still unable to afford broadband the ability to utilize it. This was proven very useful during the period when education was ordered to being done virtual as CCT had to turn up the public Wi-Fi location in the Town of Milton location due to the number of families utilizing this complimentary service.*

- f. A description of actions taken by a city, village, town, or county in support of the grant application that have not been discussed in the context of a public-private partnership above, including but not limited to:
- The contribution of funds, easements or permissions to use publicly-owned real estate, construction materials, or other items of value to the grant project.
 - The contribution of in-kind assistance to the grant project in the form of waived fees and expenses for obtaining use permits and permissions.
 - The contribution of other items of benefit to the grant project, such as public outreach and education, vehicles, water, etc.
 - Certification as a Broadband Forward! Community or Telecommuter Forward! Community.

The Town of Buffalo is certified as a Broadband Forward Community. The township also had numerous Broadband Committee and regular town meetings open to the public to discuss the opportunity for a broadband project. In addition to these meeting, the township also surveyed residents and businesses. The township also passed a public-private partnership with CCT.

Buffalo County is certified as a Broadband Forward Community and has passed a resolution promoting the growth and investment of broadband within the county. The Buffalo County Board of Supervisors formed a Broadband Committee who work to bring broadband to the unserved and underserved areas of the county. See Exhibit D.

- g. Letters and messages in support of the application submitted by prospective customers, local government officials, and other interested persons.

See Exhibit E.

- h. Any other equitable factor that the applicant desires to discuss, including one or more of the factors in Wis. Stat. § 196.03(6) that the applicant believes its project would advance. In discussing this element, the following information may be useful:

CCT will provide the Public Service Commission any additional information needed to approve this application.

**BROADBAND EXPANSION GRANT APPLICATION
PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT
WISCONSIN STATE STATUTE §196.504**

This Public/Private Partnership Agreement (“Agreement”) is made by and between the Town of Buffalo, a Wisconsin municipal corporation (“Town” or “Buffalo”) and Cochrane Cooperative Telephone Company, a Wisconsin corporation (“CCT”). The Town and CCT are individual referred to as “Party” and collectively referred to as “Parties”.

WHEREAS, the Town seeks to help provide access to broadband services in unserved and/or underserved areas and to encourage economic development within its boundaries; and

WHEREAS, CCT proposes to construct broadband infrastructure to reach certain unserved and/or underserved residents and business locations in the Town where such service is currently unavailable or is prohibitively expensive; and

WHEREAS, CCT is applying for grant funding from the Wisconsin Broadband Expansion Grant (“Grant”) to build a Fiber-to-the-Home (“FTTH”) project throughout the Town boundary (“Project”); and

WHEREAS, the Town is a political subdivision of the State of Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS, the Town desires to enter into this Agreement to work with CCT to secure funding through application(s) to public grants, awards and loan programs intending to construct broadband infrastructure or through alignment of other appropriate external funding sources for economic development to support the Project; and

WHEREAS, at the January 25, 2022 Town board meeting, the board voted to proceed with CCT and the proposed joint broadband Project between the Town and CCT, and to contribute an amount of \$400,000.00 to extend fiber into the Project area *conditioned upon the awards of* a Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (“Commission”) Broadband Expansion Grant to CCT for the Project; and

WHEREAS, the Town will assist in the public education and outreach in support of successful Project outcomes. The Town shall also provide in-kind assistance to the Project in the form of waived fees for permitting, zoning and easements necessary for the Project; and follow their Broadband Forward and Telecommuter Forward Certifications which have been certified by the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin.

WHEREAS, enhanced broadband access and availability will be utilized to position the Town for desirable economic growth through addressing existing service disparities, while providing a means for accessing the advantages of technology-based economic development practice for the subject locations of this Project.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Parties agree as follows:

1. Purpose. The Parties agree to cooperate and exercise their powers jointly for the purpose of providing support and/or revenues for the Project. The Project will extend CCT's existing broadband network with a Fiber-to-the-Home ("FTTH") network to existing resident and business locations within the township that requests services from CCT.
2. Authorization. Each Party shall authorize the execution, delivery and performance of this Agreement and authorizes CCT, as an agent, to execute any other agreements requested to be executed and delivered hereunder, as an agent for the Parties.
3. Project Funding. CCT estimates that the Project will cost \$3,100,000.00 ("Estimated Project Cost"). CCT shall request approximately 71% of the Estimated Project Cost (or \$2,200,000.00) in its application to the Wisconsin Broadband Expansion Grant Program. The Town agrees to be responsible for \$400,000.00 for the portion of the Estimated Project Cost related to the locations in the Town. CCT agrees to be responsible for the balance of the Project in addition to all costs and expenses that exceed the Estimated Project Cost.
4. Payment to CCT. The Town shall pay to CCT the amount of \$400,000.00 upon start of construction of fiber facilities for the Project.
5. Project Ownership. At all time, CCT shall have sole ownership of the Project and shall be solely responsible for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the Project.
6. Liability. CCT Shall have sole liability for the Project and any and all claims, obligations, liability, costs, demands, damages, expenses, fines, penalties, or causes of action ("Claims") that may arise from the Project and its construction, operation, or maintenance. CCT and its successors and assigns shall indemnify and hold the Town and its officials, employees, and agents harmless from any and all Claims, including the costs of litigation and reasonable attorney's fees, which may arise out of the ownership, construction, maintenance, or operation of the Project regardless of any fault on the part of the Town, its officials, employees, or agents.
7. Records. CCT will maintain and be the custodian of all records associated with the administering and performance of this Agreement, and will make those records available to the Town upon request.
8. Report. CCT shall meet with the Town on a semi-annual basis for the purpose of presenting an oral report on the status of the Project. The date, time, and place of such meeting shall be determined cooperatively among the Parties. No less than five (5) days prior to such meeting CCT shall provide a written report regarding siting, construction progress with respect to the Project.


9. Effective Date. This Agreement shall become effective upon its execution by both Parties.
10. Termination Date. If the Grant is awarded, this agreement shall terminate 30 days after completion of the Project. The completion date of the Project will be agreed upon by both Parties. If the Grant is not awarded, this Agreement shall terminate upon notice from the Commission that the Grant will not be awarded. If the Grant is not awarded, neither Party shall have any obligation to proceed with the Project. If the Grant is awarded in an amount less than requested in the Grant application, the Parties shall confer and determine the feasibility of proceeding with the Project.
11. Amendments. Any amendments to this Agreement must be in writing and signed by the Parties.
12. Entire Agreement. This Agreement, including its recitals and exhibits constitutes the entire agreement and understanding of the Parties with respect to the subject matter of this Agreement. There are no representations or understandings of any kind not stated in this Agreement.
13. Governing Law. This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State of Wisconsin.
14. Counterparts. This Agreement may be executed in two or more counterparts each of which shall be deemed an original but all of which together shall constitute one and the same instrument.

TOWN OF BUFFALO:

By: 
Steve James – Town Chairman

Date: 1/25/2022

COCHRANE COOPERATIVE TELEPHONE COMPANY:

By: 
Shawn Squires – Chief Executive Officer

Date: 1/25/2022



Personnel Advisor

Ana Rolbiecki
608-685-6208

Ryan VanDeWalle

Administrative Coordinator
407 South Second Street PO Box 494
Alma, WI 54610-0494

Email: sonya.hansen@buffalocounty.com
Phone (608) 685-6235 Fax (608) 685-6300

Financial Advisor

Lisa Schuh
608-685-6207

February 17, 2022

Mr. Steve James
Chairperson
Town of Buffalo
W394 Bluff Siding Road
Fountain City, WI 54629

RE: Letter of Commitment, Broadband Funding Support

Dear Mr. James:

With the approval of the Buffalo County Finance Committee and in accordance with the policy set forth in Buffalo County Resolution 17-12-06; I am pleased to inform you the Town of Buffalo has met the requirements for the award of \$100,000.00 in broadband support funding. Buffalo County will honor this request as long as the provider and the Town of Buffalo remain in compliance with the guidelines set for in Resolution 17-12-06.

If you have any questions, concerning this letter of commitment, please contact Steve Schiffli at 608.685.9101 or stephen.schiffli@co.buffalo.wi.us.

Thank you for your commitment to your residents and we look forward in assisting you in your broadband expansion project.

Sincerely,

Administrative Coordinator

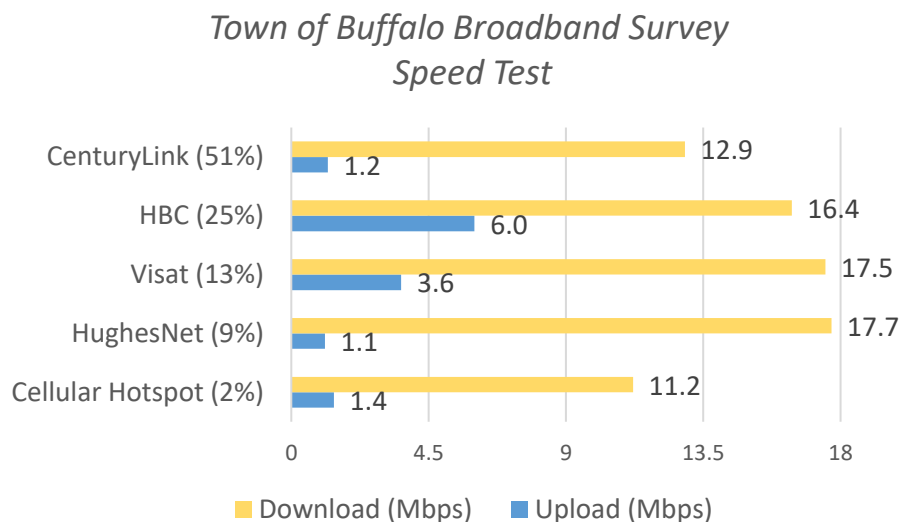
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Town of Buffalo Broadband Survey Executive Summary

Rural residents in the Town of Buffalo, although close to a decent size city have long been neglected and thus have complained about their internet service being unacceptable and, in some locations, non-existent. Over the course of the pandemic many residents were forced into telecommuting, virtual education, and even telemedicine all with below average connections. To assess the issue, a broadband committee was formed and a survey was conducted to see exactly what residents are experiencing.

The Town of Buffalo resident addresses were obtained through records provided by the Town of Buffalo Town Clerk. A paper survey was mailed to the addresses in the Township on November 30, 2021 with a deadline of December 15, 2021. Shortly after the deadline, 188 surveys were returned or 51% of surveys. The broadband committee decided to do a door-to-door push in an attempt to get residents to submit surveys. A hard deadline of January 31, 2022 was then set to finalize the survey results. Final results of the survey showed a response rate of 59% or 226 surveys returned.

Details of the survey and responses showed that the median age of Town of Buffalo residents is 50–65 years of age and of all respondents 28% have children who are school age. Regardless of age, 21% of residents reported that they currently do not have internet service at their address. The reason for not having service was astonishing as 28% say they use their cell phone, 14% said it was because options are too slow, 14% saying that the internet is not available, and 4% saying they use public internet. The remaining responses were because they do not need internet service (no device for example). Of those surveyed who said they do not have internet service, 67% said that they would consider signing up for fiber optic service. For those who did report that they have internet service, respondents were asked if their current service was adequate. 77% of those said it was either sometimes or not at all. For those respondents who said sometimes, the most common reason why was due to not being reliable at 45% and slowness at 29%. Of these respondents, 96% said that they would consider signing up for fiber optic service. For those who did have internet service, they were asked to do speed tests. The results of those tests are summarized in the chart below with the percent of subscribers next to the provider's name.



As is with most surveys, participation is key. Survey history for the township has usually been around 30% participation depending on the issue. So, with over 51% response, it is a signal that residents have a vested interest in this topic most likely due to the lack of quality, reliable broadband for the residents. This very clear with 90% of all respondents reporting that they would be interested in signing up for quality, high-speed services.

November 28, 2017



Sonya J. Hansen, Administrative Coordinator
Buffalo County
407 South Second Street
PO Box 494
Alma, WI 54610

Re: Broadband Forward! Community Certification for Buffalo County, Wisconsin

Dear Ms. Hansen:

The Public Service Commission's Wisconsin Broadband Office has reviewed your application for certification as a Broadband Forward! Community. Based upon its review of your application and pursuant to [Wis. Stat. § 196.504](#), I am pleased to inform you that the Wisconsin Broadband Office hereby approves your request and certifies Buffalo County as a Broadband Forward! Community. The certification is effective as of the date of this letter.

Broadband access is increasingly important to our economy, education and daily life. The state as a whole—citizens, governments, providers, schools and businesses—has an interest in expanding broadband access and usage in underserved areas of the state. Becoming certified as a Broadband Forward! Community sends a signal that Buffalo County has taken steps to reduce obstacles to broadband infrastructure investment by streamlining administrative procedures for broadband projects.

The state of Wisconsin is pleased to support the investment in broadband infrastructure within Buffalo County by certifying it as a Broadband Forward! Community, and we look forward to working with you to ensure success and continued broadband expansion in your community. The Wisconsin Broadband Office stands ready to serve as a resource for Buffalo County. Please contact Angie Dickison, State Broadband Director, at 608-267-9138 or angie.dickison@wisconsin.gov for additional information.

Buffalo County's Broadband Forward! Community certification serves as an outstanding example of public-private collaboration to maximize broadband infrastructure investments in Wisconsin—and moves us closer to our goal of bringing broadband access to every corner of our state.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sarah", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Sarah Klein
Administrator
Division of Business and Program Management

DL: 01599814

December 28, 2021

Jeff Strom, Chair of Broadband Committee
Town of Buffalo
W387 State Rd 35/54
Fountain City, WI 54629



Re: Broadband Forward! Community Certification for the Town of Buffalo, Wisconsin

Dear Jeff Strom:

The Public Service Commission's Wisconsin Broadband Office has reviewed your application for certification as a Broadband Forward! Community. Based upon its review of your application and pursuant to [Wis. Stat. § 196.504](#), I am pleased to inform you that the Wisconsin Broadband Office hereby approves your request and certifies the Town of Buffalo as a Broadband Forward! Community. The certification is effective as of the date of this letter.

Broadband access is increasingly important to our economy, education and daily life. The state as a whole—citizens, governments, providers, schools and businesses—has an interest in expanding broadband access and usage in underserved areas of the state. Becoming certified as a Broadband Forward! Community sends a signal that the Town of Buffalo has taken steps to reduce obstacles to broadband infrastructure investment by streamlining administrative procedures for broadband projects.

The state of Wisconsin is pleased to support the investment in broadband infrastructure within the Town of Buffalo by certifying it as a Broadband Forward! Community, and we look forward to working with you to ensure success and continued broadband expansion in your community. The Wisconsin Broadband Office stands ready to serve as a resource for the Town of Buffalo. Please contact me, Jaron McCallum at 608-267-2160 or jaron.mccallum@wisconsin.gov for additional information.

The Town of Buffalo's Broadband Forward! Community certification serves as an outstanding example of public-private collaboration to maximize broadband infrastructure investments in Wisconsin—and moves us closer to our goal of bringing broadband access to every corner of our state.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jaron McCallum", is written over a light grey horizontal line.

Jaron McCallum
Strategic Initiatives Coordinator
Division of Digital Access, Consumer and Environmental Affairs
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

December 28, 2021

Jeff Strom, Chair of Broadband Committee
Town of Buffalo
W387 State Rd 35/54
Fountain City, WI 54629



Re: Telecommuter Forward! Community Certification for the Town of Buffalo, Wisconsin

Dear Jeff Strom:

The Public Service Commission's Wisconsin Broadband Office has reviewed your application for certification as a Telecommuter Forward! Community. Based upon its review of your application and pursuant to [Wis. Stat. § 196.5045](#), I am pleased to inform you that the Wisconsin Broadband Office hereby approves your request and certifies the Town of Buffalo as a Telecommuter Forward! Community. The certification is effective as of the date of this letter.

Broadband access is increasingly important to our economy, education and daily life. The state as a whole—citizens, governments, providers, schools and businesses—has an interest in expanding broadband access and usage in underserved areas of the state. Becoming certified as a Telecommuter Forward! Community sends a signal that the Town of Buffalo has taken steps to promote public-private partnerships to support telecommuting opportunities.

The state of Wisconsin is pleased to recognize the Town of Buffalo's commitment to supporting telecommuting opportunities by certifying it as a Telecommuter Forward! Community, and we look forward to working with you. The Wisconsin Broadband Office stands ready to serve as a resource for the Town of Buffalo. Please contact me, Jaron McCallum at 608-267-2160 or jaron.mccallum@wisconsin.gov for additional information.

The Town of Buffalo's Telecommuter Forward! Community certification serves as an outstanding example of public-private collaboration to maximize the benefit of broadband infrastructure investments in Wisconsin, in support of economic development and community vitality.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jaron McCallum', is written over a light gray horizontal line.

Jaron McCallum
Strategic Initiatives Coordinator
Division of Digital Access, Consumer and Environmental Affairs
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICE
407 South Second Street
PO Box 494
Alma, WI 54610
Stephen S. Schiffli, Manager
Phone (608) 685-9101
Fax (608) 685-6300
Stephen.Schiffli@co.buffalo.wi.us

February 8, 2022

Steffany Powell Coker
Secretary to the Commission
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
4822 Madison Yards Way
North Tower- 6th Floor
Madison, Wisconsin 53705-9100

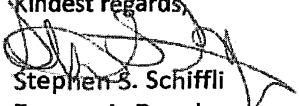
Dear Ms. Coker:


The County Board of Supervisors develops an annual plan of priorities to serve the citizens of Buffalo County. As the Economic Coordinator working in concert with Buffalo County Administration, in partnership with the County Board of Supervisors and Community Stakeholders; broadband access continues to grow as an issue of economic stability and importance.

The Buffalo County Board of Supervisors clearly understands the connection between broadband access and community growth and economic expansion and stability. In 2017, the Board established a Broadband Committee consisting of community experts in broadband distribution, stakeholders, and committed board members. In 2017, ordinance 17-09-01 was adopted, solidifying Buffalo County's commitment to the model and designation of *Broadband Forward*. Moving to 2022 and beyond, the Board continues to support community efforts, such as those in the Town of Buffalo, to expand broadband with financial commitments to three communities in Buffalo County moving forward with plans for broadband expansion. Buffalo County over the last three years has committed \$800,000.00 to support municipal broadband capital infrastructure projects.

The only way in rural Wisconsin, *Broadband Forward* maintains project feasibility, is with the partnership of multiple entities, coming together to ensure success. Buffalo County has partnered with the Town of Buffalo and Cochrane Telephone Cooperative in their efforts to continue to enhance the overall quality of life for their residents and businesses. We ask the State of Wisconsin through the PSC to partner as well. Without PSC support and financial backing, broadband is out of reach to our rural communities.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and continued support.

Kindest regards,

Stephen S. Schiffli
Economic Development


Ryan VanDeWalle
Administrative Coordinator

SS:ss



JEFF SMITH

WISCONSIN STATE SENATOR – 31ST DISTRICT



March 8th, 2022

Stephanie Powell Coker
Secretary to the Commission
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
4822 Madison Yards Way
North Tower-6th Floor
Madison, WI 53705-9100

Dear Review Panel Members,

As you consider applications for the 2022 round of the Broadband Expansion Grant Program, I urge you to consider Cochrane Cooperative Telephone for their broadband deployment project. Cochrane Cooperative Telephone has shown a strong dedication to expanding broadband to underserved and unserved areas in Buffalo County and will continue to do so with their new proposed project in the Township of Buffalo. This project for your consideration will have a positive impact on students, residents, and the economies in Buffalo County.

Cochrane Cooperative Telephone has served the Cochrane, Buffalo City, and Waumandee areas for 117 years. The cooperative has strong customer service and a commendable track record of expanding broadband to rural areas in Wisconsin.

As you know, Buffalo County is home to over 13,000 residents and contains seven school districts. The COVID-19 pandemic forced our communities to operate remotely, emphasizing the importance of broadband access for our students and businesses to thrive. Without reliable broadband access, the effects of the pandemic were compounded and rural communities were hit harder than other areas of Wisconsin.

Cochrane Cooperative Telephone aims to bring 384 homes and businesses fiber cable within the Township of Buffalo. This project's success will mean more educational opportunities for our students, greater connections for our businesses, and better access to telehealth for our elderly. Property values will increase, younger residents will remain in our hometowns, agriculture will be able to utilize new innovative technologies and rural communities will grow. The Town of Buffalo is a beautiful and valued part of the state, and the approval of this grant application would allow them to improve residents' quality of life.

I am proud to represent Wisconsin's 31st Senate District, and I am committed to the betterment of Wisconsin as a whole. I recommend the approval of this grant application because I believe that Buffalo County is a great place to live and raise a family and that Cochrane Cooperative Telephone is dedicated to helping these areas receive the broadband services they need.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jeff Smith'.

JEFF SMITH
State Senator
31st Senate District



Cochrane-Fountain City School District

S2770 State Highway 35 ♦ Fountain City, Wisconsin 54629

Dr. Jo-Ellen Fairbanks, Ph. D
Superintendent
jfairbanks@cfc.k12.wi.us
608-687-7771 x301

Mr. Steve Stoppelmoor
Principal
sstoppelmoor@cfc.k12.wi.us
608-687-4391 x102

Mrs. Sue McKay
Assistant Principal
smckay@cfc.k12.wi.us
608-687-4391 x106

Karen Knospe, President
Rita Greshik, Vice President
Bonnie Breza, Clerk
Lynn Doelle, Treasurer
Don Baloun, Director
Larry Cyrus, Director
Kalene Engel, Board Director

2/10/22

Steffany Powell Coker
Secretary to the Commission
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
4822 Madison Yards Way
North Tower- 6th Floor
Madison, Wisconsin 53705-9100

Dear Ms. Powell Coker,

My name is Jo-Ellen Fairbanks and I am the superintendent of the Cochrane-Fountain City School District. As COVID-19 continues to impact our daily lives, the future has never felt so unpredictable. One thing that remains consistent however is our commitment to providing a rigorous, high quality academic experience for all our students. As a school district, we have changed our daily operations and implemented multiple instructional models to mitigate the COVID-19 risk to our students and staff.

An integral component to our plan for instruction is digital learning. Through digital learning students can receive real-time remote instruction from certified teachers, participate in critical thinking, collaborative projects, and develop the skills needed to be successful in the digital world outside of the K-12 school environment. Beyond the current COVID-19 crisis, digital learning can facilitate quality, consistent learning for students who encounter short- or long-term medical conditions, have anxiety or mental health issues, or for children who are medically fragile.

A barrier to providing all students with equitable digital learning opportunities is internet access. We have been working with individual families to find solutions to their lack of or inconsistent connection to the internet, however, this is not our area of expertise and in some cases, based on our geography, there is not a reasonable, remote solution.

According to the Wisconsin Broadband Map, the Town of Buffalo has been identified as underserved and is eligible for a Broadband Expansion Grant. I am writing this letter to urge you to award this grant. Today in the digital information age, internet access is as critical a utility as electricity. The children of the Town of Buffalo deserve the same access to digital resources and opportunities as their peers.

Sailing forward, together

Dr. Jo-Ellen Fairbanks Ph.D.
Superintendent
Cochrane-Fountain City School District